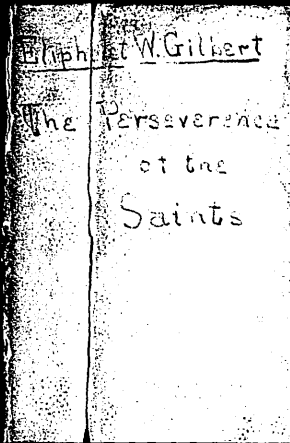




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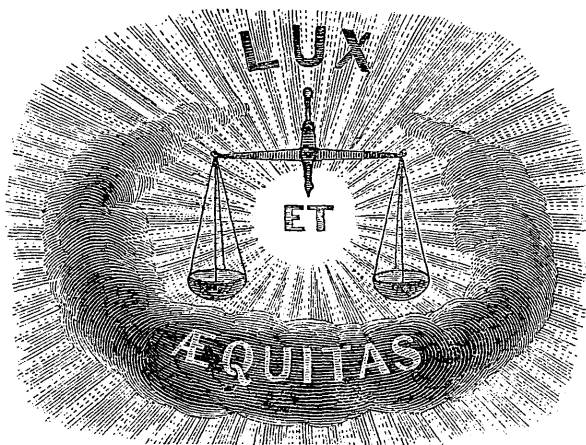
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THE
PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS.

BY

REV. ELIPHALET W. GILBERT, D.D.



PUBLISHED BY THE
TRACT COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES.

DEPOSITORY AT No. 178 CHESTNUT STREET,
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REMINISCENCE.

SHORTLY subsequent to the presentation of this tract to the Committee for publication, and when its gifted and lamented author was in full health of body, vigour of mind, and elasticity of spirit, he became the subject of malignant disease, ceased his labours on earth, and went to realize in his own personal experience the truthfulness of the argument here presented. In the light of eternity his lucid views have been confirmed to his own soul. If perused with attention and freedom from prejudice, this short treatise cannot fail to produce conviction. It beams with the beauties and glows with the power of scriptural illustrations. This was a prominent feature of the author's ministrations: while instructive, logical, animated, and having a directness of point which could not be unnoticed, they were rich in the draughts made from the overflowing reservoir of divine truth. This tract may be regarded as his dying testimony to one of the most solacing truths contained in the sacred volume, as the hymn with which it closes, is one of the sweetest to a Christian's heart to be found in any uninspired selection. The Lord honoured his living ministry, and by this printed messenger of good, he, being dead, may yet speak encouragingly to pilgrims on their way to the heavenly Zion. Let all who are skeptical on the subject discussed, examine well the condensation of truth which it presents. It is a voice to them from the grave. The heart which suggested an exhibition of the topic, and the hand which traced out the lines, are now cold in the embrace of death. But, while the change has been a mournful one for the church in which he was a faithful steward and a shining light, it has been ineffably blissful to him. The vail of eternity has been lifted to his eye. His cares, anxieties, and toils in the vineyard of his Master have ceased. He is now an associate of *the just made perfect*. He is privileged

—— to see, and hear, and know
All he desired or wished below;
And every power finds sweet employ
In the eternal world of joy.

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THE doctrine of the infallible perseverance of the saints is not, in my opinion, a *fundamental* doctrine of the gospel. Of course, people may hold different sentiments respecting it, and be saved; yet I cannot but regard it as a *very important* doctrine, and one which is clearly and strongly taught in the word of God—one which is, in a measure, essential to Christian *comfort*, and greatly conducive to the *glory* of God.

In offering a few remarks on it, the design of the writer is not to awaken controversy, or to condemn those Christians who do not believe it. He is far from doubting the *piety* of those individuals and churches who hold views on the point different from those which this tract is intended to exhibit. Nay, he is persuaded that in those churches there are some of the most consistent Christians on earth, and, perhaps, as many real saints as in our own, or any other section of the church. His aim, is simply to state the ground on which the doctrine of our church is built, and to answer the objections which are usually urged against it.

A mere *outline* of the argument, however, is all that is proposed. And if a large space should be allotted to the *objections* which are to be noticed, or if some of these should be regarded as trivial, let it be remembered that great stress is often laid on them, and that to pass them by unnoticed might be construed as inability to remove them. A free use of *italics* has been indulged, on account of the

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brevity of the argument, to show to the most careless reader the hinge on which the controversy between Calvinists and Arminians turns. I will

- I. State and explain the DOCTRINE;
- II. Offer some ARGUMENTS in proof of it; and,
- III. Notice some OBJECTIONS.

A few words will *explain* what is meant by the expression, "the perseverance of the saints."

1. By a "saint" is not meant a *perfectly holy person*, for there is not such a one on earth. Nor, running to the other extreme, do we consider every *awakened* and *convicted* sinner a saint, for many are alarmed, excited, and partially reformed, who are never thoroughly converted. Nor do we mean *mere professional* Christianity, for outward profession often covers hearts at enmity with God. But by a *saint* is understood a *real Christian*—one who has been *born again*, John iii. 7—one who has become a *new creature*, 2 Cor. v. 17; or, to use a favourite expression of our opponents, one who has "been soundly and thoroughly converted." It is *certain* that such a person will not perish.

2. When we say that a saint will not fall away and be lost, we do not mean that this arises from any thing *in the Christian himself*, but from the *immutability* of the *purpose* and *promise* of God. If left to himself, the Christian would fall in a moment; and hence arises the propriety of those cautions, exhortations, and warnings against falling, which abound in the word of God.

3. When we say a Christian will not *fall from grace*, we do not mean that it is impossible to lose *many degrees of grace*, or to be backsliders to a considerable extent; for this we admit is a frequent occurrence; but that such will not fall *entirely away*, so as to lose *all* grace and *perish* eternally. Dr. Emmons and some other New England divines admit a *total*, though they deny a *final* falling from grace. Our church, in my opinion, very properly denies both; but the latter is the more important of the two, and it is to this I shall principally direct attention.

Our doctrine, therefore, is,

"*That no real Christian—no one who has been truly regenerated and made a new creature in Christ Jesus, WILL EVER BE SUFFERED TO PERISH ETERNALLY.*"

ARGUMENTS FOR PERSEVERANCE.

My first arguments shall be founded on the *general principles* of the gospel; after which express passages of Scripture shall be adduced.

I. The doctrine of *Election* proves perseverance. I shall not here enter fully into this most unpopular subject, but shall content myself with observing that *saints* are elected unto salvation—of course to *perseverance*. 2 Thess. ii. 13: “We are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because *God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.*” “God hath chosen,”—here is election—“chosen *from the beginning,*”—here is the *eternity* of that election,—“chosen to salvation,”—here is the *end* of that election—“*through sanctification and belief of the truth,*”—here is *perseverance* in grace. See, also, Eph. i. 4–12, 1 Pet. i. 1–4: “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy,” &c.; “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ,”—“to an inheritance incorruptible,” &c. Saints, therefore, are *chosen* or *elected* to salvation. The only question is, whether this election *secures* salvation? That it does, is evident from two considerations.

1. The elect can *never be deceived or led fatally astray*. Matt. xxiv. 24: “Insomuch that, if *it were possible,* they should deceive the very elect.” Does not this teach that it is *impossible* to “deceive” them, so as to ruin them? This *impossibility* arises, however, not from the *wisdom* of Christians, but from the *immutable purpose* of God to bring them to salvation.

2. Because at the day of judgment *nothing shall be laid to their charge*. Rom. viii. 33: “*Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect?*” The apostle challenges any one to name an *accuser*, or a *charge*, which should appear against them. Now, the apostles, in the texts I have quoted, address all *saints* as *elected*, and, of course, teach that all saints will *persevere*.

II. The doctrine of *Efficacious Grace* proves perseverance.

The manner in which a man becomes a Christian makes it probable that when once converted, he will never cease to be a Christian. His conversion is not *of himself*: if it were, he might *of himself* go back again; but his conversion is an act of *Almighty power* and *sovereign grace*. Eph. i. 18, 19, and ii. 4, 8. The doctrine of the Bible is that all mankind are by nature at *enmity* with God, Rom. vii. 6, 7; that, in order to be Christians, we must be *born again*, John iii. 7; that those who are born, are born not of the will of *man*, nor of the will of the *flesh*, but of *God*, John i. 13; that those who are willing to serve him become willing in consequence of his *power*, Ps. cx. 3, (and hence our opponents so often call on God to "come down with *power*;") that those who are called are called not of *works*, but of *grace* given in Christ Jesus before the world began. 2 Tim. 1. 9.

From all which we are taught that the cause of a sinner's coming to Christ is not in himself, but *wholly in God*. Now, if God glorifies his power and grace in thus bringing a sinner to himself, what good reason can be assigned for his ever casting him off? The sinner can never be *worse* than he was when he was called; and, if God *loved* him then, why should he ever after *change* and hate him?

I will illustrate my argument by a single text, John vi. 44: "*No man can come unto me, except the Father which has sent me draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day.*"

Observe, 1. This is a universal proposition, applying to *every man*,—"No man can come," &c. 2. The cause of the sinner's coming to Christ is not *in himself*. He never *will* come, unless converted by *Divine influence*. 3. When he does come, his conversion is to be attributed not to himself, but to God alone—to the "drawing of the Father." 4. What shall become of him when he is thus *drawn* and has come to Christ? Shall he be suffered to go back? or shall he be saved? Our Lord answers the question, "*I will raise him up at the last day.*" This is certainly a *promise*, and not a *curse*, and therefore the *resurrection* is used in a good sense for a resurrection to *life*. As the term "*life*" in the New Testament does not mean mere *existence*, but *happiness*, so the "*resurrection*" generally means the

resurrection of the righteous. Therefore Paul was so anxious to "attain unto the *resurrection* of the dead." Phil. iii. 11.

Our Lord, therefore, promises, in this text, that he *will grant eternal salvation* to those who are thus drawn to him by the Father. And, as *all saints* are thus drawn, it is evident they will *persevere* till "the last day."

III. The *nature of the Covenant of Grace*, and the *character of our Surety*. From the 5th chapter of Romans, it is evident God hath made *two covenants* with man, the first with *Adam*, for himself and all his posterity; the second with *Christ*, for himself and all his people.

The design of the *second covenant* was to remedy the *defects* of the *first*. Heb. viii. 6-13.

Our *surety* in the first covenant was frail and fallible; our *surety* in the present, *infallible*. Under the first covenant the *conditions were never performed, and the blessings were lost*. Had Adam fulfilled the conditions, he would have been confirmed and all his posterity with him in happiness for ever. But our second surety *has fulfilled the conditions* and secured the blessings of the covenant for himself and all his people. He has been admitted into heaven, and there can be no doubt his people will all be admitted also. If the atonement was *yet* to be offered; if the righteousness by which they are to be justified was *yet* to be provided; if the conditions of the covenant were *yet* to be fulfilled; if salvation depended on *their* faithfulness,—there would, indeed, be great uncertainty as to the salvation of saints. But since our surety has performed all the conditions, the Father will not break his covenant with the Son by refusing to save every individual of his people. Ps. lxxxix. 34.

In short, the whole comes to this:—your salvation, O Christian, depends on *Christ's* faithfulness, or on *your* faithfulness, or on *both*. If it depends on *your* faithfulness, you are lost; if on *Christ's*, you are *safe*, for "he is faithful who has promised." If he has promised to be faithful to you *only so long as you are faithful to him*, then the whole depends on *your* faithfulness at last! And in this case you are worse off than before the fall, for then you had a surety in Adam who was *perfect*, and not likely to fall; but

now you have *yourself* for a surety, and are *sure* to come short and perish.

But, if *Christ* be the surety of saints, they are certain to *persevere*.

Thus far I have argued from the general principles of the gospel, because, as *they* are admitted, they will have their force in proving the doctrine of perseverance. But, if I were arguing with an "Arminian," I would *waive* all these principles, which he would either wholly or in part deny, and would argue with him from the following *plain passages of Scripture*.  Please refer to the Bible for the texts in full.

IV. Because *none become saints but those who have been previously GIVEN to Christ, and such can never be lost*. John vi. 37, 39: "*All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out*. This is the Father's will who hath sent me, that of *all* which he hath *given* me I should *lose nothing*, but should raise it up at the last day." Observe the terms "*given*" to Christ—"coming" to Christ—"in no wise cast out"—and "*lose nothing*"—all cover precisely the *same extent*. So that if one who was *given* to Christ should not *come* to Christ, or one who came should be *cast out or lost*, the whole would be falsified.  See the text.

Suppose, for instance, the number given to Christ be a *thousand millions*, (though we hope ten thousand times that number will be saved,) then it is evident,

1. *Every individual* of these thousand millions given to Christ, *shall come* to Christ, or become a Christian. Can you doubt? Suppose, then, *one* of them should be overlooked, and should not come to Christ, do you not perceive the declaration would be *false*—for "*all*" who were given to Christ would not have come to him! It is absolutely *certain*, therefore, *all will come* to Christ. Suppose them come. Shall they *persevere*? Yes, for

2. Not one of these thousand millions can be *cast out or lost*, without breaking this *absolute promise* of Christ. Suppose only *one* individual, after coming to Christ, should *on some wise* be cast out—only one—would not this break the promise as effectually as though a *million* were cast out! *This single text, therefore, secures the infallible per-*

severance of every saint that ever lived, or ever will live, on earth.

"Ah, but," says an objector, "though *Christ* will not cast him out, he may *cast himself out*." Ans. Would he not then be *lost*? But *Christ* says, "I should *lose nothing*," and adds the positive promise before explained, "*And I will raise him up at the last day*."

Now, if you would duly appreciate the weight of this argument, bring up all the OBJECTIONS you have ever heard,—"Perseverance is inconsistent with *free agency*—tends to *licentiousness*—inconsistent with *cautions, warnings*, falls of Christians, apostacies, &c.,"—bring them all to bear on this single text, and you will find them "like snow-balls pelting a wall of brass," or like noisy waves dashing and breaking on a rock!

This text, too, will confirm all that I have said about election, &c.

Obj. "*Coming to Christ is a condition of their salvation*." Ans. Call it "*condition*," or what you please, it is *sure to take place*, for *Christ* has promised "all that the Father giveth me *shall come to me*." Their coming, therefore, and their salvation, are just as *certain* as though there were no such "*condition*" in the case.

V. Saints are *Christ's SHEEP*, and *shall never perish*. John x. 11-29: "I am the good Shepherd: the good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father, and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one."

NOTE 1. *Christ* knows his people *before* their conversion, and calls them his *sheep*. Speaking of the yet *unconverted* Gentiles, he says, (16,) "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must *bring*." (They were, therefore, *not yet brought*.) Just so our Lord told Paul of the

unconverted Corinthians, "I have much *people* in this city." Acts xviii. 10. 2. The conversion of his people is *certain* and *infallible*. "Them also I *must* bring, and they *shall* hear my voice." Their calling, therefore, is absolutely fixed. Well, suppose they are called and have become Christians, will they *persevere*, or shall they be left to perish? Hearken—3. Christ *secures to them eternal life*. 28, 29 : "My sheep hear my voice and they follow me, (he takes that for granted,) and I *give unto them eternal life*." Observe, he does not say "*will* give, if you persevere," &c.; but "*I give*" now, immediately. And what does he give? Mere *temporary* favour, so long as they are faithful? No, he gives unto them "*eternal life*." And, lest some one should say, though you now favour them, they will by and by perish, he adds, "and they shall NEVER perish;" and lest some one should say, Satan or wicked men will pluck some of them out of your hand, he adds, "neither shall any pluck them out of my hand;" and lest some caviller should still object, Thou art but a man, and cannot guard thy people in all quarters of the world, he rises still higher, "my Father which *gave* them me is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand!" and lest an obstinate believer in falling from grace should still object, "Your Father may be of a *different* mind," our Lord declares, "I and my Father are *one*!"

Thus, by *five* things as "*immutable*" as the word of Christ, those who have heard Christ and followed him may be perfectly sure of *perseverance* to the end, and of everlasting life, as the result.

Obj. "Hearing Christ and following him are *conditions* of becoming his sheep."— Ans. No, for they were his *sheep before* they heard and followed him. (16.) And call them "*conditions*," or what you will, they do not make perseverance doubtful; because these will *certainly* take place, for Christ has promised they "*shall* hear" and *be brought*. Of course, they do not oppose the doctrine of the *certain* perseverance of every saint. Bring all the OBJECTIONS to bear against this also, and you will find the wall as solid here as before.

VI. THE PRAYER OF CHRIST for all saints secures their salvation. John xvii. 9, 20 : "I pray for them : I pray

not for the world, but *for them which thou hast given me*. Neither pray I for these alone, but *for them also which shall believe on me through their word.*"

Obj. "Christ here alludes to his *apostles*." Granted; he does allude to them *principally*, and some things in the chapter may allude to them only; but the burden of the chapter manifestly refers to *all his people* in every age.

1. Because he speaks of *power given him over all flesh*, that he should give eternal life to as many as his Father had given him, (verse 2.) It seems to be narrowing this text too much to suppose he alludes *only* to the twelve apostles. But supposing him to have had in his eye *all his future people*, the sentiment is sublime and grand. 2. But whether he *here* alluded to all his saints or not, it is evident, in the 20th verse, he had in view the *whole* of his future church. "Neither pray I for these (apostles) alone, but *for ALL them which shall believe on me through their word.*" Now, not only all the early converts believed on Christ *through the word* of the apostles, but all Christians since have believed through the same word *written*; and all future saints will be brought to Christ through the same word of these apostles. Hence it follows that, in this prayer, the Mediator actually interceded for *every individual believer*. The only question, therefore, is,—*Will his prayer be heard?* or will some one for whom he prayed be lost? He shall answer it himself, xi. 41: "Father, I thank thee, that thou hast heard me. *And I knew that THOU HEAREST ME ALWAYS*, but because of the people which stand by I said it," &c.

Before this argument can be destroyed, one of these two things must be proved—either that Christ *did not pray for all his people*, or that his prayer was *rejected* by the Father!

VII. The CHAIN OF SALVATION proves it. Rom. viii. 30: "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Here Predestination, Calling, Justification, and Glorification, are represented as so many links of an Almighty chain. If there be any meaning in the apostle's argument, the *predestination* of a person *insures* his *calling*; (i. e. his *effectual* calling, or *conversion*;) his calling insures his *justification*; and his justifi-

cation insures his *glorification*. Do you doubt? Suppose the contrary,—break the chain, and see what will be the consequence. God *predestinates* Peter and John; but, in the event, it appears Peter and John are *not called*! Does not this falsify the declaration of the text—“*whom he did predestinate, them he also called?*” Or suppose Peter and John are *called*, but God refuses or neglects to *justify* them,—would not this contradict the word of God, “*whom he called, them he also justified?*” Again, suppose Peter and John are predestinated, called, and justified, but after all they do not *persevere*, are never *glorified*! What a fall is here!—not of two immortal souls only, but of what is far greater, the TRUTH OF GOD! And yet we are told of Saul, Solomon, Judas, &c., that they were *called* and *justified*, and yet not *glorified*! Which will you believe, the apostle or them? We are told that the *cautions* and *warnings* of Scripture prove it *possible* to fall away; but here the Holy Spirit declares it *impossible*. Whose word shall stand, the Lord’s or theirs?

Here, then, is a STRONG TOWER, into which the Calvinist runs and is safe. Men may *rail*, but no argument formed against it can prosper.

VIII. BECAUSE NOTHING SHALL SEPARATE CHRISTIANS FROM THE LOVE OF GOD IN JESUS CHRIST. Rom. viii. 35–38: “*What shall separate us from the love of Christ?*” The apostle challenges to name *any thing* which shall prevent final salvation; and then adds, “*For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, shall ever separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*”

From which it is evident, 1. God loves his people with an *unchangeable love*. 2. One reason why Christians are never separated from his love, is that they are loved, and not for their own sakes, (not chosen for their merits, nor rejected for their sins,) but for the sake of *Christ Jesus their Lord*. 3. Therefore the apostle had a *full assurance* (for this is the meaning of the word *persuaded*) not only for himself, but for every saint, that no *temptations* of the world, the flesh or the devil, should ever prevent their eternal salvation.

Obj. "He does not mention *Sin*."

Ans. 1. Neither does he *except* it, and those who say he does except it, should *prove* their assertion. 2. *Sin* was the *only thing* which he or his brethren were *afraid* of—the only reason for dreading persecution, famine, peril, death, devils, &c., was lest these should lead them into *sin*. This was the *only way* in which these things could possibly separate saints from the Saviour; and, therefore, when he expresses his firm persuasion that none of these things should separate them from the love of God, it is the same thing as saying, *these shall never influence us to sin*. God will give us grace equal to our day. Hence he says in another place, "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." 1 Cor. x. 13. 3. *Sin* is certainly included in the phrase "things present or things to come." And if neither things present nor things to come shall separate, it will be difficult for an objector, unless wiser than the inspired apostle, to name any thing that *shall* separate from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus the Lord!

IX. Because God hath made the decree of salvation IMMUTABLE for this *very purpose*, that his saints may have STRONG CONSOLATION and an ANCHOR to their souls. Heb. vi. 17, 18: "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the *immutability* of his counsel, confirmed it by an *oath*; that by two immutable things, (his word and his oath,) in which it was impossible for God to lie, *we might have strong consolation*, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us, which hope we have as an *anchor of the soul*, both sure and steadfast," &c.

Now, 1. *Saints* are the persons who have "fled for refuge to the hope set before them." 2. To these God wishes to give *strong consolation*, an *anchor* to their souls, by which they may ride in safety, however boisterous the storm or terrible the temptation. 3. How does he accomplish this? By giving them an *immutable promise*, and confirming it by an *oath*, that nothing shall ever separate them from his love!

What could be stronger? It appears to me, that if a man be *conscious* of having fled to the hope set before him in the gospel—as many a Christian is, and *every* Christian

ought to be—for him, under such circumstances, to doubt his infallible salvation, is to suspect God capable of *falsehood* and *perjury*!

Obj. "He only promises to be faithful *in case we are faithful*." Ans. Not to say that *Christ*, our surety, *secures our faithfulness*, so that we should be in no danger even on that supposition,—the Arminian idea that the faithfulness of God to us depends on our faithfulness to him, would completely upset this cup of *consolation*, and render our strong *anchor* of no use; for a sinner, even after his conversion, is as unable to stand or to persevere, in his own strength, as a stone unsupported to remain balanced in the air. And Christ might just as well take us up in the air and tell us, "If you remain here without falling, I give you my *word* and *oath* to save you," as to tell us "My faithfulness shall continue as long as yours!" What *strong* consolation could there be if salvation were promised upon *such* conditions? The cup of strong "consolation" would be emptied at once. We should carry the water of life in a sieve, or draw it from the well of truth in a bucket full of holes! The anchor might be strong as Omnipotence, and made fast as the everlasting hills, but we should hold it only by a *cobweb cable*!

X. Because saints are KEPT BY THE POWER OF GOD THROUGH FAITH UNTO SALVATION. 1 Pet. i. 5: "Who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time."

Note, 1. The saint's safety, "who are *kept*." The original word signifies to *guard*, or to *keep with a garrison*. Thus 2 Cor. xi. 32: "In Damascus, the governor *kept* the city of the Damascenes *with a garrison*, to apprehend me, and through a window, in a basket, was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands." Christians, therefore, are represented as in a garrison or castle guarded on every side, lest the enemy should come in to destroy, or the soul should escape and be destroyed. God guards his people on every side, and there is not even a "window in the wall" through which he will let them escape. They are thus "*kept*" as in a garrison. 2. *Who* keeps the garrison? How strong is the *power* employed in keeping them? The text informs us, "who are kept by the POWER OF GOD." 3. *How long*

are they kept?—"Unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time;" and all this "*through faith*," or in a state of perseverance in grace.

Now, unless the garrison of the saints is too feeble to preserve them—unless the power of God is insufficient to keep them—and unless, after they have attained "salvation at the last time," they can fall from heaven, I do not see how it is possible for any of the saints to fail of everlasting life. Those who suppose the saints *keep themselves*, may well doubt their infallible perseverance; but those who believe that they are "kept by the power of God encamping round about them that fear Him," must be excused from any distrust.

XI. Because GRACE ABIDETH IN BELIEVERS and makes it impossible to sin fatally or unto death. 1 John iii. 9: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed *remaineth* in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

Observe, 1. This is a *universal* proposition, applying to all Christians. "*Whosoever* is born of God." What is said of one is said of *all*. 2. It is *impossible* for such to *commit sin*; "*he cannot sin*." Now, we must evidently except sins of *infirmity*, *deficiency*, and *partial* captivities to the law of sin, or we contradict the whole Bible, and make the apostle contradict what he said just before, "If any man say I *have no sin*, he deceiveth himself," &c. (i. 8.) The *sin*, therefore, of which the apostle here speaks, is of a different kind; either the *unpardonable sin*, (as some suppose,) or a *wilful, deliberate, habitual course of sin*, which appears to me to be the meaning of the Holy Spirit. "Committing" sin (*ποιῶν ἀμαρτίαν*) is here opposed to "doing righteousness," (*ποιῶν δικαιοσύνην*) and as "doing righteousness" is an habitual course of righteousness, so "doing sin" is an habitual course of sin. The argument will be the same whether the *sin* here referred to be the *unpardonable sin*, or such a *course of sin* as implies the person has no grace. To one of these the text *must* refer. And it is expressly said that this sin the real saint *cannot commit*—of course he *cannot fall from grace*. 3. We have the *reason* assigned *why* the Christian cannot fall: "for, or because *his seed remaineth in him*." So far from *sin driving*

grace from the heart, as our opponents so frequently assert, it appears from this that *grace* is the conqueror, and *drives sin* from the heart, and thus makes the believer's fall impossible. His seed REMAINETH in him.

Obj. "The argument proves too much, even that believers have *no sin of any kind*." Ans. "No; it only proves that they do not live in a *course of sin*, that they do not *follow sin* as a trade, nor *work evil*." 3 John 11.

Obj. "The text simply means we *should* not sin." Ans. Where then is the force of the *reason* assigned for not committing sin, "for his seed *remaineth* in him?" The apostle evidently meant to assert the *impossibility* of a saint ever falling from grace, so as to be *entirely devoted* to sin.

XII. Because saints are SEALED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT UNTO THE DAY OF REDEMPTION. 2 Cor. i. 22, 23: "Now, he which *establisheth* us with you in Christ and hath *anointed* us, is God: who hath also *sealed* us and given us the *earnest* of the Spirit in our hearts." An "earnest" is a part given as a *pledge* of hereafter bestowing the remainder. Eph. i. 13, 14: "In whom also after that ye believed, ye were SEALED with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the *earnest* of our *inheritance*," &c. Eph. iv. 30: "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are SEALED unto the day of redemption."

2 Tim. ii. 19: "The foundation of God standeth *sure*, having this *seal*, the Lord knoweth them that are his." The object of a *seal* is to *distinguish* property, and thus the Lord distinguisheth or marketh "them that are his;" it is also to *confirm* or *establish*. Thus we set our seal to a bond, and kings set their seal to decrees; and thus God makes his foundation *sure*. It is to preserve *inviolable*, thus we seal a letter, a cabinet; and, I may add, it denotes *secrecy* and *value*. In whatever sense you understand the word here, it denotes God's *special care* and *value* of his people. It is set on them to *save them from destruction*. It was said to the destroying angels—"Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have *sealed* the servants of God in their foreheads." Rev. vii. 3.

Now, after the saints have been thus *sealed*, shall they not be *known* of God?—shall they not be *established*?—shall they not *stand sure* and be saved from *destruction*?

And, after they have received this seal as an *earnest* of heaven, shall they be disappointed of the *remainder*? This would be to make the seal of *God* less security than the seal of his creatures. We receive, therefore, the Spirit as the seal of salvation, and God's *earnest* of heaven. And this seal is to secure the saints "*unto the day of redemption,*" after which they will be in no danger..

XIII. Because *believing is a proof that the believer has been ordained to eternal life.* Acts xiii. 48: "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed." This teaches,

1.. That *some are ordained to eternal life*—of course to *perseverance* unto the end. 2. That their ordination or election to eternal life *preceded* their faith in Christ; and that therefore they were not ordained to life *on account of their faith*, but for some other reason—even for the sake of Christ, in whom they were chosen. 3. That this *faith* was an *evidence* of their having been ordained to eternal life.

The argument needs no application. Show me one who has believed, and I will show you one who has been ordained to eternal life. Hence our Saviour's solemn declaration, John vi. 47, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me *HATH* (not shall have) everlasting life." Also, John iii. 36.

XIV. Christians are safe because *their life is not in their own keeping, but is hid with Christ in God.* Col. iii. 3, 4: "Ye are dead, and *your life is hid with Christ in God.* When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

Note, 1. Christians are *dead*—that is, to the world, the flesh, and the devil; and yet they have *life*, i. e. spiritual and eternal life. 2. This life is not left to themselves to keep, lest it be lost; but the support, continuance, and security of their life are in God. "Your life is hid with Christ in God." It is *hid*, kept as a *secret treasure*—hidden from Satan, from the world, and in some measure from the believer himself. 3. Christ is sure to keep it *unto the end*. "When Christ who is our life shall appear, *then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*" It is in view of salvation as a treasure kept by Christ we hear such expressions as these: "Unto him who is *able to keep you from falling*, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory."

Jude 24: "I know whom I have believed, and that *he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him* until that day." 2 Tim. i. 12. On this account saints are said to be "*preserved in Jesus Christ.*" Jude 1. And it is this consideration which gives such force to that promise, "*Because I live, ye shall live also.*" John xiv. 19. Until the Lord of Life *dies again*, therefore, the life of his people is divinely secured.

XV. Because *though God may suffer his children to fall in part, he will not suffer them to perish utterly.* Ps. lxxxix. 30-34: "If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless, my loving-kindness will I *not utterly* take from Him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail." These words, with the greater part of the psalm from which they are taken, though spoken originally of David himself and his natural seed, have also a manifest reference to *Messiah* (the true David) and *his seed*. They show,

1. That Christians sometimes wander and fall into sin—"they forsake his law and walk not in his judgments."
 2. These sins bring *suffering*. "I will visit their transgression with the *rod*, and their iniquity with *stripes*."
 3. Yet he will *not utterly forsake*. "Nevertheless, my loving-kindness will I *not utterly* take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail."
 4. It is intimated that to take away mercy from *his people* would be to take it from *Christ*, whose people they are; and that such conduct on the part of God the Father would be unfaithfulness to his Son, and a breach of their mutual *covenant*. "My loving-kindness will I not utterly take from *Him*, nor suffer my *faithfulness* to fail; my *covenant* will I not break; once have I sworn unto David, his seed shall endure for ever," &c.

For similar promises of *unchangeable* love, see Isa. xli., xliii., xlv., liv.; in short, the greater part of that prophecy, from the 40th chapter to the end.

These general promises we see fulfilled in *particular* instances; as in *David*, who fell, but soon rose again higher than ever; in *Solomon*, who, though he fell *far*, did not fall *utterly*; in *Peter*, who, though he was suffered to be

"sifted by Satan as wheat," was not left in the power of his enemy. Just so of *all his people*,—he may suffer them to be tempted, but "God is *faithful*, who will not suffer them to be tempted above what they are able, and will, with the temptation, also provide a way of escape." 1 Cor. x. 13. If, then, GOD IS FAITHFUL, saints are safe.

XVI. Because the Bible *takes it for granted of all apostates that they never were Christians*. 1 John ii. 19: "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out from us that it might be made manifest they were not all of us."

Note, 1. Here were some apostates, or, as some would say, persons that "fell from grace." "They went out from us." But what does the apostle say of them? 2. That they *never were real Christians*: "they were not of us." He does not say "are not," but "*were* not of us." They never were genuine saints—never had real grace. 3. *He takes it for granted that, if they had been Christians, they would have remained so, and would have never fallen*. "For, if they had been of us, they would, *no doubt*, have continued with us." Observe how *positively* he denies of apostates that they ever were Christians; and with what confidence he asserts that, if they had been saints, they would never have fallen! He does not even *argue* on the subject; but, as if the matter would not admit of a *question*—as if there was no *possibility of its being otherwise*—he takes it for granted, "if they had been of us, they would, *no doubt*, have continued with us."

So we say of Judas, Saul, Hymeneus, and apostates now-a-days, "if they had been saints, they would have continued saints." If they had been "once in grace, they would have been always in grace." And we think it unnecessary to *doubt* upon a subject on which the inspired apostle speaks with so much *confidence*. If men will still assert that our doctrines were first preached by *Satan*, that they came from *hell*, and will stake their soul's salvation that men may fall from grace, we can only wonder at them, and weep over them! We will not render railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing. They may talk of their having been once Calvinists, and of their having tried our system and rejected

it. We say of these as the apostle said of errorists in his day, "They were not of us; for, *if* they had been of us, they would, *no doubt*, have continued with us." They undoubtedly held (or they would not assert it) *what they thought* Calvinism; just as the persons mentioned by John possessed *what they thought* Christianity; but the apostle decided that they were mistaken.

In all this I mean not to call in question the real piety of my brethren. Would I were half as holy as some who affirm that they "abhor Calvinism!" But this I say, when they speak against Calvinism, "they know not what they do;" and peradventure they "will be found fighting against God!"

Apostates are generally spoken of as those who *never had grace*. 1 John iii. 6: "Whosoever sinneth *hath not seen Him*, neither known Him." Observe, it is not said, "*does not now see Him*," but "*hath not seen Him*;" i. e. never saw Him. So 3 John 11, "He that doeth evil *hath not seen God*." Show me a man, then, who now lives in a course of habitual sin, who has no grace, and I will show you one that *never had grace*, whatever he might have professed. Thus our Lord says of certain self-deceivers, "I *never* knew you," Matt. vii. 23; that is, I not only do not know and own you *now*, but I never knew and owned you as my true disciples. Thus the *stony ground* hearers had "*no root in themselves*." Matt. xiii. 21. The foolish virgins had "*no oil in their vessels*." Matt. xv. 3. Thus the apostates in Peter (ii. 20-22) are compared to the *swine* whose nature was not changed. All these are intimations to us, I think sufficiently clear, that those who fall away from their profession are to be considered as *having never had grace*. Yet you will hear men appealing to *their own experience*; and ministers appealing to the *experience* of their hearers, that *they themselves* have fallen from grace, and even pointing to "*swine now wallowing*" in sin, as instances of those who were once of the number and *nature* of Christ's *sheep*!

That those who teach such doctrines sincerely believe them, I have no more question than that I sincerely believe my own; but I ask, how can such doctrines be reconciled with the general tenor of the word of God, which every-

where teaches that "*if they had been of us, they would, no doubt, have continued with us?*"

XVII. Lastly, because the contrary opinion leads to many ABSURDITIES. It appears to me to follow from the doctrine of our opponents,

1. That, in respect of the *covenant* under which we are, *we are worse off than before the fall*. Our state was dangerous enough then, when we had a perfect man for our surety; but infinitely more so now, when we wretched sinners are our own sureties! And yet the apostle says of Christ that "he is the mediator of a *better covenant*, which was established upon *better promises*." Heb. viii. 6. If better than the Sinai Covenant, (which contained some promises of grace,) infinitely better than the covenant of works. 2. A man may *fall from grace twenty times a day, and twenty times a day rise into grace again!* Thus that marvellous *change* which requires Almighty power to effect—that renovation of nature which is called a *new birth*, a *new creation*, a *resurrection* from the dead, becomes a mere trifle! . . . Thus the Holy Spirit, so far from *dwelling* in the believer's heart in peace, is liable to be dispossessed every day, hour, and moment; to have his temple turned into Satan's castle, according to the sinner's caprice! 3. Upon this principle, there is nothing in the word of God to authorize an *assurance of salvation for ourselves*. Nay, more: there can be no *certainty* of our continuance in grace for one hour or moment! For, if our perseverance depends upon ourselves, and there be no promise that a saint *shall* persevere, then there is no promise that *you* or *I* shall persevere; and, therefore, if on our dying bed, and within five minutes of our end, though we are now full of grace and love and joy, we cannot be *sure* but we shall *yet* sink to hell. For, if God has made no promise to keep us from falling, he may let us fall at one moment as well as at another, and even while the breath is leaving the body Satan may assault, our faithfulness may fail, and from the very verge of heaven, with GLORY full in view, and angels waiting to receive and bid us welcome, we may drop—for ever! 4. For the same reason there can be no such thing as *assurance for others*, and we can have little comfort in the death of our pious relatives and friends. Though they may have served God from child-

hood, and brought forth the fruits of holiness till they are threescore years and ten, and have been burning and shining lights in their day and generation, we cannot be sure but they will yet perish! And should they die far from home, on the ocean, in a strange land, in a delirium, or in any way in which we could not have evidence of their being in grace at their *last moment*, we can have no certain or comfortable hope. In fact, if I believed that the perseverance of a saint depended on his own faithfulness, with my present views of human nature, I do not know how I could even *hope* for a single friend on earth; and, as to *confidence* of their salvation, it would be impossible until I saw them pass the gate of heaven. If there be no *absolute* promise to the believer to *keep* him to salvation; then, though the apostle Paul were within five minutes of eternity, and entering the heavenly harbour under the full sail of a perfect assurance, we could not be SURE, but that in the very article of death, in the very entrance to the harbour, he might slip his cable, lose his anchor, or strike on some hidden rock and sink to perdition! Who could tell, in reference to our dying Christian friends, but that, in the last hour, when heart and flesh were failing them, Satan might take advantage of their feebleness, and, by a violent assault, make them *let go their hold*, and then drag them down to hell! This is *not* the consolation of the gospel. The infallible promise of God makes us confident that he who hath begun a good work in us will perform it (or carry it on) unto the day of Jesus Christ.

“Grace will complete what grace begins,
To save from sorrows and from sins;
The work that wisdom undertakes,
Eternal mercy ne’er forsakes.”

5. It is absurd to *pray to God for perseverance*, or to *thank him* for the same. For, if God cannot cause us to persevere without destroying our free agency, and if our perseverance depends upon ourselves, I do not know why we should pray to God for influence which he cannot consistently grant, or ask assistance from anybody but *ourselves*.

The psalmist might say, (Ps. cxix. 117,) “*Hold thou me up*, and I shall be safe;” for *he* did not believe that “*holding up*” destroyed his free agency. But those who think they must *hold themselves up* or fall, cannot, according to

my views of propriety, offer this prayer. If we persevere, I cannot see the propriety of *thanking God* for that for which we are chiefly, if not wholly, indebted to ourselves. The *apostle* might say, (Acts xxvi. 22,) “Having obtained *help of God*, I continue until this time;” but *we* ought to say, “Having been *faithful to ourselves*, we have come thus far.”

The above appear to me legitimate inferences from the doctrine of our opponents. I am aware, however, that these inferences are some of them in fact denied; and I do not think it fair to charge on any church inferences from their doctrine, which they themselves reject. I am persuaded that many who reject our doctrine, rely as entirely upon *grace* for perseverance, and give to God the glory of salvation as entirely as ourselves. There is sometimes “a happy inconsistency between men’s heads and hearts,” so that the absurdity of their *doctrines* is not always discoverable in their *lives*. But it is fair to draw what you think reasonable inferences from a scheme, provided you do not represent *your* inferences as *theirs* when they disown them, and to show what you think the natural tendency of a doctrine, although the advocates of that doctrine may deny that such are always its actual effects. This is a liberty which very few hesitate to take with *us*, making inferences which we deny, and attributing to our doctrines a tendency which we abhor. To this proceeding we have no objection, provided they will call their children by their own names.

Whether the inferences I have drawn are reasonable or not, and how far they are practically adopted by those who oppose the “perseverance of the saints,” I shall not attempt to decide; but they appear to me to be the inevitable consequences of their scheme.

OBJECTIONS.

To the foregoing doctrine some of our Christian brethren object,

I. That “*it destroys free agency*. God cannot decree the infallible perseverance of a saint without infringing his liberty as a moral agent.” And they say a great deal about *necessity* being inconsistent with *liberty*, &c.

To which we answer,

1. We grant that *physical* necessity or *force* is inconsistent with liberty; but *moral* necessity or *certainty*, which is all we plead for, does not interfere with liberty in the least.

2. We do not suppose any *other* or *greater* influence necessary to *keep* us in a state of grace than to *bring us into* that state at first. In a word, if *conversion* by divine power does not destroy free agency, *preservation* by the *same* power will not. Nothing but divine grace *upholds* a Christian for a moment; and, if this upholding for a *moment* does not destroy free agency, why should upholding for an *hour*, or a *day*, or a *year*, or a *lifetime*, destroy free agency? 3. If God cannot decree the infallible perseverance of a saint without destroying his free agency, then our Lord *Jesus Christ* was not a free agent, for his infallible perseverance was *certain* and *fixed*. Isa. xlii. 1-4. The same may be said of *angels*, whose perseverance depends entirely upon God, and yet they are free agents. And the same is true, also, of *glorified saints*, of whom Christ says, "because I live, ye *shall* live also." Their perseverance, therefore, throughout eternity, is as certain as the perseverance of Christ himself; and yet are they not free? WE wish no higher freedom. See Rom. xiv. 4: "Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand."

OBJ. II. "*It tends to licentiousness.*"

Ans. We cannot always judge accurately of the tendency of a doctrine, especially if it be one which we do not rightly *understand*, which is generally true of doctrines *we do not hold*. The safest rule is to judge of the tendency by the *actual effects*. We think the doctrines of our Methodist brethren, for instance, to be of dangerous tendency. They think otherwise; and the actual effects prove that we do not understand the true nature or tendency of their peculiar tenets. Let them make the same allowance for us. We are quite sure they do not understand the tendency of our faith; for we *know* it tends to purify our hearts. The *certainty* of their salvation did not tempt the primitive believers to licentiousness; why should it have a different effect on us? They could say, (1 John iii. 2, 3,) "WE *know* that when he shall appear we *shall* be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope purifieth himself even as

he is pure." Why should the certainty of *our* perseverance have a different effect? Especially as we can have no *hope*, much less *certainty* of salvation, unless conscious of *present* holiness. Besides, this objection has been brought in every age against the doctrine of Justification by Faith, and the whole system of Salvation by *Grace*. Rom. iii. 7 and 31; vi. 1; ix. 19, &c. The apostolic answer should suffice.

OBJ. III. "The certainty of their salvation is inconsistent with the *efforts* and *labours* of saints to save themselves."

The whole force of this objection lies here, that, unless there be some *uncertainty* of success, a person *will not labour* for success; and, if there was a *perfect certainty* of salvation, a Christian would not trouble himself to use the means.

Ans. 1. *Christ* had a *perfect certainty* of success and salvation, and yet he used the means, and laboured with "strong crying and tears." 2. *Paul* had a *perfect certainty* of escape from shipwreck, and yet he used the means. Acts xxvii. In a *desperate* case, like that of a condemned and helpless sinner, *uncertainty* of escape, so far from being a stimulus, deadens every effort! Let there be a glimmering *hope*, and he will do something; let there be a *certainty* of a blessing *on his efforts*, and he will strive with all his might. And Christians can have no certainty of salvation except *through their own efforts*. How can they expect to *run the race without running*, or *fight the battle without fighting*?

OBJ. IV. "The *exhortations*, *cautions*, and *warnings* of the New Testament prove the *possibility* and the *danger* of saints falling away."

Ans. 1. There is a possibility and a danger of saints "falling away;" i. e. to a *considerable extent*. They are in continual "danger" of complying with temptation, of conforming to the world, of sitting down in indolence, and of falling into sin. Hence the propriety of all these *moral stimulants* to activity and watchfulness. If a soldier, from the known character of his captain, were sure of winning the battle, and of the life of every soldier being preserved, he would, nevertheless, fight, knowing that he would otherwise be knocked down, trodden under foot, wounded, and disgraced, even though he escaped with life. Just so; though Christ has promised that every soldier shall escape

with life, he has not promised he shall escape with *honour* and receive the crown of victory, unless he fight valiantly. He may, and often does, leave the indolent and the cowardly to be wounded, disgraced, and maimed for life. As the *present comfort* of a Christian, therefore, depends on his activity and holiness, and as his *future reward* will be *measured* by his attainments here, there is the utmost propriety and kindness in administering these cautions and holding out these encouragements. 2. Viewed *in himself*, as I have hinted before, there is a possibility and danger, yea, a *certainty* of his falling *entirely away*, unless he strives and labours. But there is neither certainty, possibility, nor danger of God's breaking an *absolute promise* to save all who come to Christ.

OBJ. V. "Facts of acknowledged saints falling into sin—such as *David*, *Solomon*, and *Peter*." As great reliance is placed on this argument, I will notice it more particularly.

DAVID. 1. That he *died* a saint, and is *now* in heaven, I believe nobody questions. 2 Sam. xxiii. Of course he did not *finally* fall from grace, and his example, therefore, is nothing to the point. They must bring an instance of a saint who *actually perished*. 2. That he fell into *sin*, and into a great and complicated sin, is lamentably true. That his conscience was stunned by his fall, and his spiritual comfort entirely destroyed, I have no question. But that he fell *entirely* from grace, when there are so many clear declarations of God to the contrary in regard to *every* saint, I will not admit, except on one condition—that those who assert it will produce some *express declaration* of God to that effect.

That the Lord was *displeased* with David, as he is with every Christian when he sins, is not denied; but that he *wholly cast him off* is nowhere said, and never can be proved. That the Holy Spirit took away the "joys of his salvation" is admitted, but that the Spirit *entirely* left him cannot be proved, and the contrary is implied in Ps. li. 11. A flame may be damped without being quenched; a seed may be buried deep without being killed; a man may be very sick and nigh unto death, and yet not dead; a saint may fall very far, and yet not be lost; God may *chastise*, but will "not utterly" destroy; may "*hide* his face for a mo-

ment, but with *everlasting* kindness will he have mercy" on his people. Ps. lxxxix. 30-34; Isa. liv. 8. It remains, therefore, for them to prove that David became spiritually dead and was "born again" a second time.

SOLOMON is another instance of a saint supposed to have fallen from grace. My reasons for believing that Solomon neither totally nor finally fell from Divine favour are—

1. The *circumstances of his birth and infancy*. "Before he had done either good or evil," in his infancy, it is said "*the Lord loved him*," 2 Sam. xii. 24; the same expression which is used of Jacob, Rom. ix. 13, and denotes his choice to salvation. 2. The *name* which the Lord then gave him, "*Jedediah*," or beloved of the Lord. I do not think an instance can be brought of a person thus honoured with a divine name, who was afterward rejected. 3. The *Promise* concerning him. 2 Sam. vii. 14, 15. Where the Lord promises to be a father to him, to *chasten* but not *disinherit* him; and expressly distinguishes the favour intended for *him* from the mere temporary favour granted to *Saul*. 4. The *reserve* expressed, 1 Kings xi. 4, 6: "And his heart was *not perfect* with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and went NOT FULLY after the Lord, as did David his father." This is spoken of him at the time of his greatest wickedness, even "when his wives turned away his heart after other gods." (Verse 4.) 5. *Commendation* after his death. 2 Chron. xi. 17; Neh. xiii. 26. 6. He wrote the book of *Ecclesiastes* (i. 1) when he was an *old man*, and confesses the very sins of which the objectors suppose he did not repent. And the apostle says of the Scripture writers generally, "*Holy men* of God, spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Pet. i. 21. Thus it appears from the *history* itself, as I think, that Solomon did not perish. But, if all this were blotted out, I would not believe he was lost, until—7. The ABSOLUTE PROMISES of God in regard to *every* saint are blotted out also.*

PETER did not *finally* fall, as all admit. That he did not

* Were there good reason to doubt of Solomon's salvation, we might put upon our opponents the burden of proof that he ever was a *real saint*, in the sense before defined. But we prefer to give our real sentiments and interpretation of the Bible.

totally fall, is evident to my mind from Luke xxii. 32, where our Lord says, "Simon, Satan hath desired to sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee that *thy faith may not fail*;" from which it is evident that his faith did not *entirely* fail.

OBJ. VI. "Some acknowledged apostates were once saints, as *Saul, Judas, Hymeneus, and Philetus*."

As to *Saul*, it is said the Lord "turned him into *another man* and gave him *another heart*," 1 Sam. x. 6, 9; (i. e. made him a *wiser* and *greater* man, to qualify him for the kingdom;) but it is nowhere said God gave him a *new* heart and made him a *holy* man, and there is no evidence that he ever had grace. "But he had the Spirit of the Lord and prophesied." True, and so had some in the New Testament, Matt. vii. 23, who "*prophesied* and cast out *devils* and did many *wonderful* works," and yet Christ says, "I never knew you." That is, they *never were* saints.

Of *Judas*, it is said that he was once a good man, because the Lord says, "Have not I *chosen* you twelve?" John vi. 70. We grant he was *chosen* to the *apostleship*, but not to *salvation*! Thus the Lord says, "I speak not of you all, I know whom I have *chosen*. Ye are clean, but not all." John xiii. 10, 18.

Obj. "But would Christ call 'a devil' to the apostleship, and send him forth to preach the gospel? What should we think of a church now that would send forth a wicked man to preach the gospel?" Ans. Which is the worse, to *call* a devil unto the apostleship, or to *continue* him in the apostleship *after* his character is discovered? And did not our Lord do this? David foretold, many centuries before, that one of the disciples would be a wicked man, and Christ knew this well and who it was that should betray him when he called him to the apostleship.

Obj. "But he cast out devils, and if he were a devil at this time, then did Satan cast out Satan, which our Lord says is absurd." Ans. This is a mere *quibble*. Suppose Judas did cast out devils, it was not *Satan*, but *our Lord* who gave him the power and the disposition to cast them out.

Obj. But it is said, "*Judas, by transgression, fell*." True, and the same passage states what he fell from, to wit, "*the ministry and apostleship*." Acts i. 25.

Obj. Jesus says, "Them which thou hast given me I have kept, and none of them is lost, *but* the son of perdition, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled." John xvii. 12. The objection turns on the word "*but*," as if it implied that the "son of perdition" was one of those "given to Christ." And in our English idiom, the inference would be natural. "But," in the Hebrew idiom, implies no such thing. The expression no more proves that Judas was one of those given to Christ, than the expressions (Luke iv. 24, 25) prove that the widow of *Sarepta* was one of the widows of *Israel*; or that Naaman, the *Syrian*, was one of the lepers of *Israel*; or that those whose "names are written in the Book of Life" were of the class that "maketh a lie." Rev. xxi. 27. See, also, Acts xxviii. 22, and 1 Cor. ii. 11. "There shall be no loss of any man's life; *but* of the ship." Quere: Was the *ship* a man's life? "Even so, the things of God knoweth no man, *but* the Spirit of God." Is the Spirit, therefore, a man?

Hymeneus and *Alexander* are also said to have fallen from grace, because they "put away a good conscience and made shipwreck of faith." 1 Tim. i. 19.

Ans. 1. A man may have a "*good conscience*" and not be a Christian, for Paul "lived in all good conscience" before his conversion. Acts xxiii. 1. And the "*faith*" of which shipwreck was made is the *doctrine* of the gospel. As it is said in 2 Tim. ii. 18, "*Hymeneus and Philetus concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already, and thus overthrow the faith of some.*" 2. These apostates are expressly *distinguished from true saints* in the next verse. After mentioning their fall, the apostle says, "*nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his,*"—plainly implying that *Hymeneus and Philetus* never were really "*his.*"

OBJ. VII. "The warning given concerning the righteous in Ezek. xviii. and xxxiii. proves that the righteous may fall away," &c.

Ans. 1. Look at the *object* of the sacred writer, which is to teach that *God will "deal with men according to their ways."* In the 18th chapter the object is to do away the parable of the "sour grapes," or the punishment of children

for the sins of their parents. The Lord declares that the *righteousness* of a *parent* shall not save a *wicked son*; neither shall the wickedness of a *parent* prevent the salvation of a *righteous son*. And, in the 33d chapter, the object is to show that no *past* righteousness shall save a man *if* he falls away; and no *past* sins shall ruin a man *if* he repents. There is nothing in this contrary to our doctrine. 2. The "*righteousness*" here spoken of *may* be a mere *external*, ceremonial righteousness, such as Paul had before his conversion. Phil. iii. 6. And I do verily believe that *apparent* righteousness, rather than *real* sanctity, is here spoken of; and also that the *rewards* and *punishments* here more immediately alluded to, are of a *temporal* kind. The contrary, at any rate, never can be *proved*. We admit that from *such* a righteousness a man *may* fall away. 3. If we grant that the *righteousness* here mentioned be *real sanctification*, it does not follow that a righteous man ever *did* or ever *will actually* fall from grace. The text only makes a *supposition*. "*When* a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness—*If* he trust to his own righteousness," &c. Now, we grant *if* he does this, and *when* he does this, he will be lost.

But it is an old maxim in logic, "*suppositio non ponit in esse*;" i. e. supposition of a case does not prove its actual existence. Suppose "an angel from heaven should preach another gospel, he would be accursed." Gal. i. 8. Our Lord says, "*If* I should say I know him not, I should be a liar." John viii. 55. But these suppositions do not prove that an angel *ever will* preach another gospel; nor that our Lord *ever will* declare a falsehood.

OBJ. VIII. "*The breaking off the Jewish branches proves falling from grace.*" Rom. xi. 17.

Ans. 1. The *olive-tree* from which these branches were broken off and others grafted in is the *visible church*. From this the Jews were cast out, and the Gentiles introduced. If this is "*falling from grace*," we do not deny it. 2. That there was not a single *saint* lost by the rejection of the Jews, is evident from the first part of the chapter, "*Hath God cast away his people?* God forbid. *God hath not cast away his people whom he foreknew. The election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.*" (Verses 1, 3, 7.) Hence

it appears that every elect person or every Christian was saved. 3. At the conclusion of the account, the apostle makes this remark: "The gifts and calling of God are *without repentance*;" i. e. without any change of mind on his part—without any recalling of his saving grace.

OBJ. IX. "*Paul laboured lest he should be a castaway.*" 1 Cor. ix. 27.

Ans. So did *our Lord*; he was "straitened until his work was accomplished," but he had no *fear* of being finally cast away. The apostle, in all his epistles, as shown already, expresses his *full confidence* of the final salvation of every saint; and, if he ever *doubted* of his own *salvation*, it was because he doubted his *conversion*. But I do not believe that, after his being caught up to the third heaven, and the clear testimonials of a Saviour's love, he ever doubted either. In this text he simply intends to show *how he lived and laboured*, as an example for them to imitate. He exhorts them to run *as if* for a prize, as a racer would, who knew that *if* he did not run well he would be disgraced. Our Saviour compares himself to a *thief*, to express the *unexpectedness* of his coming, though he resembled him in nothing else. So the apostle compares himself to a *racer*, to show the intensity of his labours, though, unlike a racer, he was *perfectly sure of victory*. Hence he says, (26,) "So run I, *not as uncertainly*; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air." See, also, Gal. ii. 2, and 2 Tim. iv. 6-8, 18: "And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom."

After all, it is not said he *was* cast away, or that any saint *will* be cast away. So that all such texts prove nothing against perseverance. That we *should all run and strive* in the same manner, every Calvinist grants.

OBJ. X. It is said of the Galatians, "*Ye are fallen from grace.*" Gal. v. 4. This is an objection drawn from the mere *words* of Scripture, without noticing the scope and *intention*. By the same rule I could prove "there is no God." Ps. xiv. Or that the apostle was a "robber of churches." 2 Cor. xi. 8. The *doctrine* of Scripture, and not the mere *words*, is the truth of God. Now, let any one glance at the preceding part of the epistle, and he will readily perceive what "*full*" was referred to—even a fall

from the *doctrines* of grace. They had "turned away to another gospel," and, forsaking the doctrine of salvation by *faith*, they sought justification by the works of the *law*. Therefore, he says, "Christ has become of no effect unto you, *whosoever of you are justified by the law*; ye are fallen from grace;" i. e. from the *doctrines* of grace. The text is hypothetical, and no more proves "falling from grace" than it does "justification by law." And, as none are *really* justified by law, how does it follow that any *really* fall from grace! Barnes's Notes, *in loco*.

Observe again, that, if it could be proved that the Galatians fell *totally* for a time, there is no proof they fell *finally*, and therefore here is no proof that any real saint will be *finally* lost. Of course, understand it as you will, it argues nothing against our doctrine.

OBJ. XI. "Salvation is everywhere offered on *condition* of perseverance, which shows that the *condition may fail to be complied with*." Ans. It shows no such thing; but only that, *unless* the condition be complied with, the blessing will be lost. This we freely grant. But we contend that the *conditions* (if they must be so called) are *sure* to be complied with by every one of Christ's people. Thus when it is said, "*If ye abide in me, ye shall ask what ye will*." "*If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed*." "We shall reap, *if we faint not*," &c. &c. It is all certainly true. But, unless our opponents prove that some real Christian *actually* fails to "*abide*," "*continue*," &c., these texts will not prove the loss of a single believer.

And I have shown already that these "conditions" are *sure* to be performed by *all* of Christ's people.

OBJ. XII. "*It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, if they shall fall away*," &c. Heb. vi. 4, 6.

The objectors must prove two things:—first, that these were *real Christians*; and secondly, that they *really* fell away. But, in my opinion, neither of these things can be proved. I see no reason to believe them real saints. 1. Because these expressions may apply to those who had only those *miraculous external gifts* so common in that day. There is nothing said of these persons more extraordinary than of the false professors mentioned, (Matt. vii. 22, 23,) of whom Christ says, "I never knew you." The *stony*

ground hearers "tasted of the good word of God,"—"they received the word with joy," and yet had "*no root* in themselves;" that is, were not truly converted. 2. They are manifestly compared to the *barren ground* in the 8th verse, which is a proof the soil of their hearts was never prepared by the Holy Spirit for a true reception of the seed. 3. The apostle had no idea *real Christians* would thus fall away. "But, beloved, we are *persuaded* better things of you, though we thus speak." (Verse 9.)

In fact, the whole is a *solemn warning* to persons who have been *enlightened* and *convicted*, not to stifle their convictions, lest they commit the unpardonable sin.

But, could it be proved these were *real Christians*, it is not said they *will certainly fall*; but "*if* they shall fall away," &c. And this I have before shown proves nothing as to the *actual event*. Besides, if it proves an actual "falling away," it proves the "impossibility" of recovery! Do our brethren believe this?

OBJ. XIII. "A sinner may tread under foot the Son of God, and count the blood of the covenant *wherewith he was sanctified* an unholy thing," &c. Heb. x. 29. From which it is argued that a man may fall from *sanctification* and from saving grace. It is taken for granted in the objection that "he who was *sanctified*" is the *apostate*. Whereas,

1. It is generally supposed by commentators that the "*Son of God*" is here referred to; and, according to the grammatical construction of the sentence, the "*Son of God*" is certainly the last antecedent. And it is equally true of Christ that he was *sanctified* and *fitted* to be the Mediator "by the blood of the covenant." John xvii. 19; Heb. xiii. 20. 2. But, admitting it to refer to the *apostate*, it remains to be proved that the *sanctification* was any thing more than *external* and *ceremonial* sanctification. That both persons and things are called *holy*, and said to be *sanctified*, which are only externally *dedicated* to God, we have abundant evidence in this same epistle. In the preceding chapter, 13th, 22d and 23d verses, we read of a *sanctification* which had nothing to do with the *heart*. "*The blood of bulls and of goats*, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, *SANCTIFIETH* to the *purifying* of the *flesh*," &c. What sanctification of *heart* could ever be accomplished by the

“blood of bulls and goats?” And yet if a person upon whom this blood had been *sprinkled* should despise the ordinance, he would be guilty of “trampling on the blood of the covenant,” for this typified the blood of Christ. In like manner, if, after having been *baptized*, and making profession of religion, we break our covenant vows and apostatize, we “despise the blood of the covenant wherewith we were sanctified,” or *separated* and *dedicated* to the service of God.

The whole, however, is merely a *caution* against apostasy from our profession, and does not teach that any *will* thus despise the blood of the covenant—much less that any will fall from real sanctification of heart. “*If we sin wilfully after having received a knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin.*” (26.) If this proves “falling from grace,” it proves also that after such fall *there is no recovery!* for such persons “there remaineth *no more sacrifice for sin*, but a fearful looking for of judgment,” &c. But these texts prove nothing as to the *actual event*, which is the thing to be proved.

OBJ. XIV. “*If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.*” Heb. x. 38.

Ans. 1. This is perfectly true in its *literal* sense, and not at all opposed to our doctrine. An opposite doctrine would be horrible. 2. There may be a difference between “drawing back” and “drawing back to *perdition*.” A saint may draw back *in part*; and, if he draws back at all, God will be *displeased* with him. 3. Here is the “*if*” again, by way of *caution*. 4. It is expressly said *immediately after*, that real Christians *do not* draw back to perdition. “We are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.”

OBJ. XV. “A man may escape the pollutions of the present world, and afterward fall away,” &c. 2 Pet. ii. 20.

Now, 1. All this may be said of those who are only *externally reformed* from the infidelity, vice, and immorality of the world, and have a *speculative head knowledge* of the ways of righteousness. That such persons may and do fall away, we do not doubt. 2. That these persons were not changed in *heart*,—that their *nature* never was renewed, is evident from the *comparison* used by the apostle on the

subject. He compares them to "a sow that was *washed* returning to her wallowing in the mire." The *nature* of the animal was not changed; though externally washed, her appetites remained the same; she was a *sow* still. Had her *nature* been changed to that of a *sheep*, she would *never have returned!*

Thus I have noticed some of the strongest arguments I have ever heard or read against the "perseverance of the saints." There are others adduced of the same general nature, but no more difficult to answer than those I have mentioned. Some of them are drawn from *metaphysics*—some from *supposed facts*—and the rest from what is thought to be *implied* in several passages of Scripture. If I understand the controversy, the only *express* declaration of the *fact* of falling from grace, which they adduce, is Gal. v. 4. And that text, as I have shown, evidently speaks of a falling, not from *sanctification*, but from *orthodoxy*. There is not in all the Bible, that I have ever seen, a solitary declaration that *any real saint ever actually perished*.

That there are *cautions* and *warnings* of the most solemn kind against drawing back at all, we cheerfully admit. But, as I have brought *express declarations* of Scripture, and *absolute promises* of God that *every saint shall persevere*, all the cautions and warnings and apparent apostasies before mentioned must be understood as *not inconsistent* with our doctrine.

Let me now state in a summary way the arguments which have been advanced.

RECAPITULATION.

It has been shown that the infallible perseverance of the saints is clearly implied and proved, in their conversion by efficacious grace—in their election to salvation—in the predestination of all the called to glory—in the nature of the covenant of grace, and the faithfulness of their surety—in the absolute promises made to those who come to Christ, that they shall never be cast out, and to his sheep that they shall never perish. And again, because predestination, calling, justification, and glorification are so many links of an

Almighty chain; because neither things present nor things to come shall ever separate them from the love of God in Christ Jesus their Lord; because the promises were made immutable and absolute for the very purpose of affording **STRONG CONSOLATION** and an **ANCHOR** to their souls; because the saints are kept as in a garrison by the power of God, through faith unto salvation; because grace abides in believers as an incorruptible seed, so that they cannot live and die in sin; because all who are converted are sealed by the Holy Spirit unto the day of redemption, and the gift of the Spirit is *God's earnest of heaven*; because the very fact of believing is a proof of a foreordination to eternal life; because the life of Christians is hid with Christ, and is kept by him and not by themselves, and while he lives they shall live also; because, though God may chastise, he will "not utterly forsake" his children; because all apostates are spoken of as proving by their apostasy that they never had grace; and, finally, because many dangerous absurdities follow from the opposite doctrine—while it spreads darkness over the dying hours of God's best people, by resting their hopes of perseverance to the end on their own uncertain steadfastness, rather than on the **UNCHANGING FAITHFULNESS AND GRACE OF GOD**.

CONCLUSION.

Thus I have endeavoured to give my views of the "Perseverance of the Saints." I have sought to do it in perfect charity toward those who differ. Should similar charity be granted toward us, for *their* sakes I shall rejoice. For myself, no conduct of others, by the grace of God, shall ever alter mine. The law of God, the law of *love*, and not the conduct of others, is our rule.

The sum of what has been said is this:—There are *express declarations* and *unconditional promises* in Scripture that *every saint*, without exception, shall be saved. There is no express declaration that any saint ever *has been* or ever *will be* lost. There are many instances of saints *falling into sin*, but no proof that such persons *never rose again*. There are instances of *apostates* who fell from their profession and died in sin; but there is no proof they were ever real saints;

and many intimations to the contrary. There are many *cautions* and *warnings* against falling away ; but these are stimulants to watchfulness, and means of grace as necessary on our plan as any other. And, finally, salvation is offered on certain *terms* ; but these *terms* are *sure* to be complied with by all Christ's people.

And now, unto Him who hath loved us with an everlasting love, and therefore with loving-kindness hath drawn us to himself ; unto Him who is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy ; unto the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and dominion for ever and ever.

HYMN.

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in his excellent word !
What more can he say than to you he hath said,
You who unto Jesus for refuge have fled ?

In every condition, in sickness, in health,
In poverty's vale, or abounding in wealth ;
At home and abroad, on the land, on the sea,
"As thy days may demand shall thy strength ever be.

"Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismay'd !
I, I am thy God, and will still give thee aid ;
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.

"When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace all-sufficient shall be thy supply ;
The flame shall not hurt thee ; I only design
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

"E'en down to old age all my people shall prove
My sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love ;
And when hoary hairs shall their temples adorn,
Like lambs they shall still in my bosom be borne.

"The soul that on Jesus hath lean'd for repose,
I will not, I will not, desert to its foes ;
That soul, though all hell should endeavour to shake,
I'll *never*—no, NEVER—no, NEVER forsake."

ANECDOTE.

A CALVINIST and Arminian were once represented as in a warm dispute relative to the doctrine of the perseverance of faith and its associated truths. It was conducted in a kindly interchange of views, but with a pertinacity characteristic of rooted adherence to long-cherished modes of thinking. At length, having exhausted the ordinary channels of argument evincive of their divergence of views, the Calvinist remarked to his friend—"After all, the difference of view between us is within very narrow limits. It is a simple question of personal dependence which is at issue." "How so?" said his astonished opponent. "Why," said the former, "you depend *on the hold which you have of Christ* for your salvation. You are a weak mortal. You may stumble and lose that hold, or Satan may paralyze the arm on which you lean, and you may perish. But I depend *on the hold which Christ has of me*. He is omnipotent; he is watchful; he is unchangeable. Whom he loves, he loves to the end—to the end of life—to the end of time—throughout eternity!"

THE INFRANGIBLE GOLDEN CHAIN.

"WE know that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did *foreknow*, he also did *predestinate* to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also *called*: and whom he called, them he also *justified*: and whom he justified, them he also *glorified*. If God be for us, who can be against us?" Rom. viii. 28-31. Appropriately and confidently may one, who has in exercise the spirit of adoption, say—If I have been *predestinated, called, justified*, what shall prevent my being *glorified*? The first link of the chain is in the heart of the God of love—the last amid the brightness and joys of the purchased and reserved inheritance. He who is the *Author* is also the *Finisher* of faith. Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. He has engaged never to leave or forsake them. Wisdom, power, and faithfulness are his.

NOTICES.

TRACTS issued by the Committee of the Assembly can be obtained at the Publication Office of MR. WILLIS P. HAZARD, No. 178 Chestnut street, Philadelphia, Pa.

Attention is requested to the following resolutions of the General Assembly at their recent session in Buffalo, May, 1853:

“Resolved, That the Tract Committee be authorized to take such measures as they may deem advisable, to secure the necessary funds for the erection of a ‘HOUSE OF PUBLICATION.’

“Resolved, That it be earnestly recommended to all our churches to take up collections, annually or otherwise, in aid of the PUBLISHING FUND under the control of this Committee.”—See Minutes, p. 330.

Tract Committee.

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